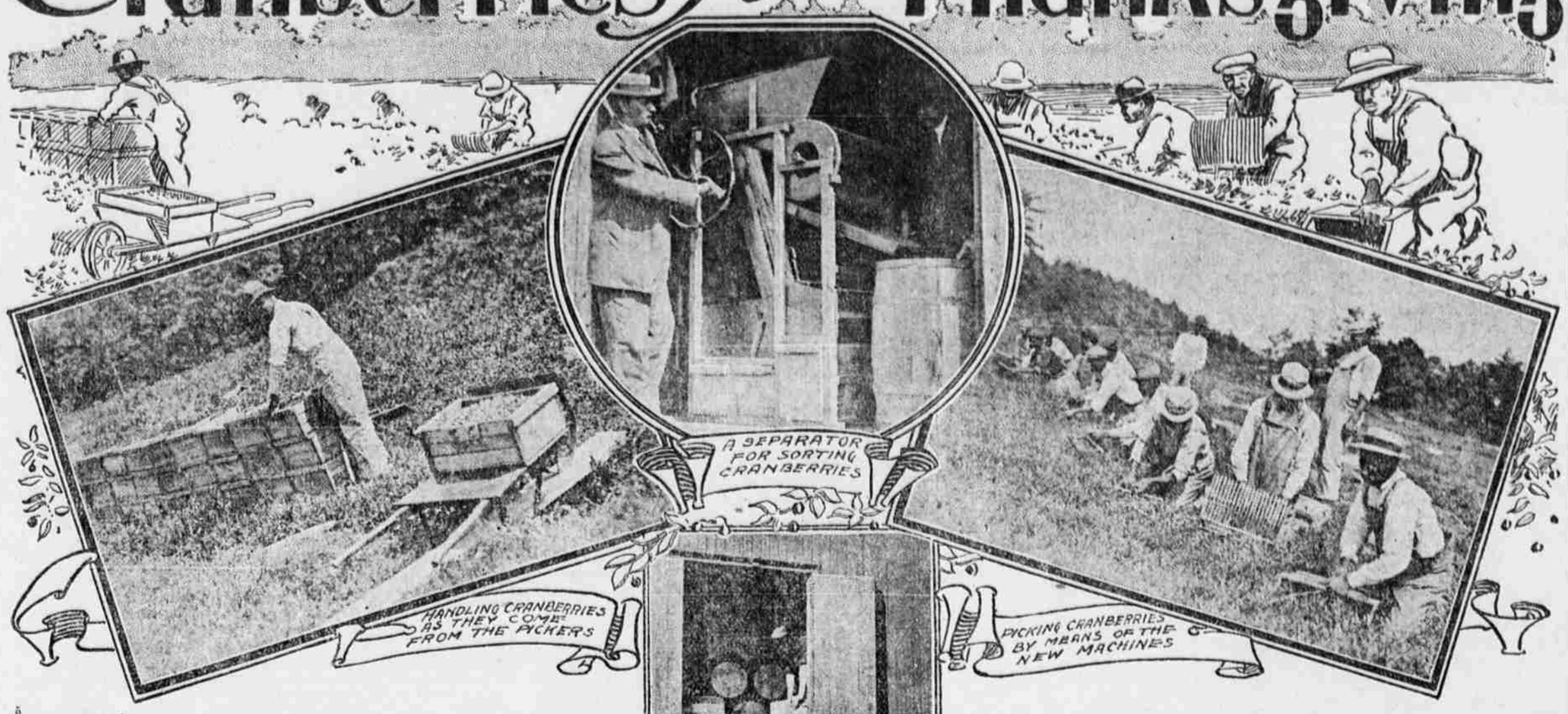
Cranberries for Thanksgiving



NEXT to a goodly supply of turkeys the most important requisite for a successful Thanksgiving is a plentiful measure of cranberries of just the proper tart flavor. As well have a Thanksgiving dinner without turkey as without the appetizing cranberry sauce. However the people of the United States have scant cause to worry because of this feature of their holiday menu. It has been years since a failure of the cranberry crop was reported and cranberry growers have been so increasing their productive areas that despite the increase in demand, due to the country's increase in population and other influences, there continues to be year by year a pretty lavish supply of the crimson berries, and most seasons find them available at very reasonable prices.

Cranberries, like so many of the other good things of life, are distinctively American delicacies. To be sure, cranberries grow wild in some other quarters of the globe—for instance in Europe, but it is only in the United States that they have been cultivated as an article of food. Even here the growing of cranberries is confined largely to three states—Massachusetts, New Jersey and Wisconsin. How important an industry it is may be surmised, however, from the fact that the Cape Cod district in Massachusetts, the greatest cranberry region on the globe, sends to market as many as one-third of a million barrels of cranberries in a single season.

The average person is wont to term all berry areas "patches," but cranberries do not grow in patches but in bogs and, as may be surmised from the name, most of these tracts are located adjacent to rivers or lakes or ponds, so that they can be flooded in the late autumn and kept under water until spring. The berries grow on a vine which nestles close to the ground in a perfect tangle, and save for keeping out the weeds and battling with the insect pests, which are numerous, the cranberries do not require very much cultivation or attention until harvest time approaches in the autumn. Then the cranberry grower must look forward to a period of anxiety, a careful, serious scrutiny of the weather. He must keep close watch on the weather, for if a frost comes ere the crop is harvested it will work sad havoc unless the grower has been forewarned and flooded his bog or built great bonfires to keep up the temperature.

In years gone by the harvesting of cranberries was done solely by the hand picking method, much as raspberries or strawberries are picked, and most of the cranberry picking was done by women and children. The "Cranberry King" used to hire as many as 1,100 pickers on his great bogs on Cape Cod and the pickers, many of whom journeyed long distances, "camped out" on the bogs during the picking season. The past few years, however, has witnessed a revolution. Now almost all cranberries are picked by the aid of machines, and because it is tiresome work manipulating these machines it has come about that most of the women and children have been forced out of the industry and the task is largely in the hands of men, the more skillful of whom receive from $3 to $5 per day.


LOADING BARRELS OF CRANBERRIES IN A REFRIGERATOR CAR

The picking machine most extensively used has the appearance of a huge wooden scoop, the bottom of which is made up of a row of metal bars, tipped with sharp prongs and set close together. In operation this scoop is shoved with some considerable force into the tangle of cranberry vines and then is drawn upward and backward with the result that the vines which have been caught slip between the metal bars but leave the berries, which are too large to pass through the openings, as do the vines, and in consequence are stripped from their stems and remain in the scoop, whence they are transferred to the tray which each picker has close at hand. An expert picker with a machine will do the work of from half a dozen to a dozen hand pickers.

The cranberries as picked on the bogs are placed in huge wooden boxes and transferred to a nearby frame building, where they are passed through a machine known as a "separator," which takes out all the leaves, twigs and other foreign matter. Then they are sorted for the elimination of any bad or worm-eaten berries and finally are placed in barrels, which are hauled away to railroad yards to be loaded into cars to the tune of from 220 to 240 barrels to the car, refrigerator cars being used exclusively. Up to the present time cranberries have been sold in bulk, but this year sees an innovation in the appearance of evaporated cranberries, for which are claimed all the advantages of evaporated peaches or apples, and in the introduction of cranberries put up in pasteboard cartons. Bearing cranberry bogs of the most desirable kind cost from $600 to $1,200 per acre, but in a bumper year a grower may get his money back the first year, and during the worst year the industry has known in a decade most of the growers made from 10 to 15 per cent. on their investment, and that, too, in spite of the fact that cranberries were so plentiful that they brought only $2 a barrel, whereas $5 to $7 a barrel is accounted an average price, and there have been years when a famine of cranberries sent the price up to $10 per barrel.

Origin of Thanksgiving Festivities

By SAMUEL WILLIAMS


"THE GUESTS REMAINED THIRTY DAYS"

THE autumn of 1621 waned on a prosperous community. Plymouth, Mass., was both healthy and wealthy. Sickness, though it had destroyed one-half the company of pilgrims, had ceased, and the crops, as a whole, had been good, the peas alone failing. All the houses in the settlement had been put into condition and a goodly stock of furs and prepared lumber had been made ready for export to England by the next ship. The waters swarmed with fish and sea fowl were abundant. The call of the wild turkey was heard in the woods and the patter of the fleeting deer was nothing strange.

The summer was past; the harvest ended. The pilgrims decided upon a period of recreation. The governor sent out four huntsmen, who in one day secured game to last the colony a week. Hospitality was extended to Massasoit, of the neighboring settlement, who brought 90 people with him. The guests remained 30 days. The company engaged in rounds of amusements, in which military drills and religious services formed a part. Thus, heartily and loyally, was inaugurated the great New England festival of Thanksgiving. For two centuries it has continued to be observed, at first mostly in the eastern states, but it has now become national, its annual return finding a welcome from boundary to boundary, both at top and bottom and either extremity of the nation.

Thanksgiving day is peculiarly an American custom, though there are some writers who claim that it is not possible to determine the date of the first observance. John A. Goodwin, in his historical review, "The Pilgrim Republic," is positive, however, that the first celebration occurred in the fall of 1621, this being followed in 1623 by the first Thanksgiving proclamation, by the governor of Massachusetts. In 1630 there arrived at Plymouth 14 vessels, bringing with them 880 colonists, making the number nearly 1,200 instead of a mere 300. On July 8, 1630, another Thanksgiving was held in acknowledgment for this accession to the ranks of the colonists. The Dutch governors of the New Netherlands also appointed different dates for public thanksgiving, from time to time, and in some historical works there is record of a dispute as to which of these colonies deserved the credit for having first inaugurated the day. Most of the best founded historians, however, give the credit to the New England states.

The Dutch governors of New Netherlands appointed occasional days of thanksgiving in 1644, 1645, 1655 and 1664, and the English governors followed their example in 1755 and 1760, and the Protestant Episcopal church in the United States in its prayer book, ratified in 1789, recommends for Thanksgiving day the first Thursday in November, unless some other day be appointed by the civil authorities. There were also occasional recommendations by other religious bodies, but no regular annual recommendation by the governor of New York before 1817.

The struggle of the colonies for independence marks the beginning of general observances of days of thanksgiving in this country. The congress of 1777, the one which prepared the articles of confederation for adoption by the colonies, adopted a resolution setting apart the eighteenth day of December, 1777, to be observed as a day of solemn thanksgiving and praise throughout the United States.

Washington, during his administration, issued two thanksgiving proclamations, one in 1789 and the other in 1795, just after the suppression of the "Whisky rebellion," which had threatened the peace of the country, and President Madison issued one upon the declaration of peace in 1815. However, in the early years of the nation the rule was for the colonial custom to be followed and the proclamation made emanated from the governors. The western states, largely people from New England or New York, early followed the lead of these portions of the country. As we have seen, the annual recommendation by the governors of New York began in 1817. From that time the observance gradually crept southward and westward, and in 1885 Governor Johnson of Virginia adopted it, and though in 1857 Governor Wise of Virginia declined to make the proclamation on the ground that he was unauthorized to interfere in religious matters, in 1858 a Thanksgiving day was proclaimed in eight of the southern states.

The day had thus naturally grown to be a national institution of almost universal observance, when the Civil war brought to sudden ripeness this along with many other tendencies, and President Lincoln put upon it the seal of his official proclamation. President Lincoln's first proclamation was in 1862, on account of the first important victory of the national arms. He issued a similar recommendation in 1863.

Decorative Conceits and Favors For the Thanksgiving Festivities

The pious, hard-driven, worn-out, but thankful Puritans who sat down at their tables one November, a few centuries ago, and made the first Thanksgiving Day, never knew to what lengths they were to drive the ingenuity of their poor descendants. But it wasn't their fault after all, that the preparer of the Thanksgiving feast today has to attend just as much to the turkey's surroundings as to the turkey itself. It was good enough for them to have a well-stocked larder from which could come the turkey, the celery, the pumpkin pie, the cranberries and all the other goodies which history puts down to their credit. Even the comparatively recent New Englanders were content with all these as long as they looked tempting and tasted good. But today, even the important fowl itself is hardly more important than the ribbons, the candies, the favors, the adornments of all kinds, which must appear on the Thanksgiving table.

"Don't bother about having too much to eat," an up-to-date daughter was heard to say to her New England mother the other day. "I want plenty of room for the ribbons and the candy boxes."

It's the same way with other daughters of an esthetic turn of mind, rather than a practical one, and it looks as if their ambitions to "make things look pretty" may be realized this year, for there is a goodly array of Thanksgiving favors and table decorations of all kinds.

Of course the turkey reigns supreme, even if it is in paper, and is seen in all sizes, all kinds, roasted to a beautiful dark brown as the cookbook says, or standing important and majestic with its big fan-shaped feather tail high in the air. In most cases the favor turkey is meant for candy, but certain new china turkeys are mustard cups.

The pumpkin is next in importance and is seen in many of the novelties. There are large paper pumpkins for centerpieces and all sorts of small ones in papier mache or tissue paper which are candy boxes. Fruits and vegetables of all kinds seem to be suggestive of the season of feasting, and many good imitations are found among the candy box collections. Goblinesque little men are made of paper fruits and fixed up to have a very grotesque appearance, and funny little figures are made of peanuts, and mounted on cards. Nuts are tied up in ribbons and are found to be prize-packages for the receiver, for in them are neatly packed little stick-pins, whistles, etc., all carefully concealed within the paper shells.

The place cards allow of a great many new designs, and an especially new feature among these is some small mirrors. The chrysanthemum is the leading flower among the paper bowers, and those in yellow or orange seem to be the most desired shades. Other imitations which are especially "life-like" are the painted piece of the pumpkin pie, the tin of Boston baked beans, the plum pudding and the ear of corn.

LENT INSPIRATION.

"I am gratified," said the first prominent citizen, "to observe the undercurrent of joy in the Thanksgiving proclamation of the governor. Hitherto the proclamations have been along the old cut and dried, stilted forms, but in this instance there is a certain tone of joyousness,of thankfulness, of pure gratefulness that is really inspiring."

"Yes," agrees the second prominent citizen, "but it's no wonder the governor felt good when he wrote that proclamation."

"No. He has started on what seems destined to be a good administration, already there is talk of promoting him to some higher office in the gift of the peo——"

"And besides," interrupts the second man, "the governor owns one of the largest turkey farms in the state.

THOUGHT ONLY OF THE GAME

Filial Affection Lost Sight of by the Small but Enthusiastic Lover of Football.

Among the spectators at a match between the Blackburn Rovers and the Olympic was a little lad about nine years of age. Though the boy's knowledge of the game may have been limited, his notion of correct play was extremely robust.

"Go it, 'Lympic," he yelled. "Rush 'em off their pins. Clatter 'em. Jump on their chests. Bowl 'em over. Good for yer. Mow 'em down. Scatter 'em, 'Lympic."

When his parent neatly "grassed" one of the opposing forwards, the youngster expressed approval by bawling, "Good fer yer, owd 'en," adding proudly to the spectors, "Feyther 'ad 'im sweet."

"Yes," said a hearer, "but he'll get killed before the game's finished."

"I don't care a carrot if he does," said the boy.—London Tit-Bits.

A Very Good Guess.

Foote Lighte—I understand there were several dozen bad eggs in the possession of persons in the audience last night and not one was thrown.

Miss Sue Brette—Because the author of the piece refused to show himself, I guess.

Mass Play Modified.

City Editor—Any radical changes for the better in football this season?

Sporting Writer—Verily. In understand that not more than one ticket speculator will be allowed to tackle a single patron at the same time.—Puck.

What's In a Name?

"See here, waiter," said Mr. Grouch, growling deeply over his plate, "I ordered turtle soup. There is not even a morsel of turtle flavor in this."

"Of course not, sir" returned the waiter. "What do you expect? Shakespeare said there was nothing in a name. If you ordered college pudding would you expect a college in it? In Manchester pudding would you look for a ship canal or a cotton exchange? And tea, sir?"—Tit-Bits.